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SUBJECT: MEDIA REACTION: U.S.-CHINA-TAIWAN RELATIONS,
AVIAN FLU

11. Summary: Major Chinese-language Taipei dailies focused their coverage October 8-11 on: President Chen Shui-bian's "Double Ten" address; the follow-up probe into the alleged shady recruitment practices regarding the Kaohsiung mass rapid transit system; Taiwan's year-end "3-in-1" elections; and the earthquake in South Asia. The pro-unification "United Daily News" ran a banner headline on its front page October 9 that read: "UDN Poll Survey: Bian's Approval Rating Drops to a New Low of 25 Percent." The sub-headline added: "61 Percent [of the Respondents] Say They Believe the DPP Has Lost the Ideals The Party Was Founded Upon; 58 Percent of [Those Polled] Say the New DPP Movement Initiated by [The DPP's Candidate for Taipei County Magistrate Election] Luo Wen-jia Is Being Made [Solely] out of Campaign Considerations."

Several newspapers reported in their inside pages October 8 the remarks President Chen made during an October 7 interview with Reuters that he believes that the U.S. arms procurement bill might be passed after Taiwan's year-end "3-in-1" elections as the KMT will no longer need to work with the PFP after the elections conclude. The centrist "China Times," however, ran an exclusive news story about the stalled arms procurement bill on its front page October 11 topped with the headline: "The United States Rushes to Freeze the Taiwan-U.S. [Joint] War Games." The newspaper also carried a news story on its page four the same day with the headline: "Another Voice Emerges Following [Washington's] Harsh Criticism against Taiwan's Arms Procurement: The United States Is Concerned about Taiwan's Obtaining Defensive Weapons."

12. Several newspapers editorialized on President Chen's October 7 remarks to Reuters in which he said his current cross-Straits strategy is to "strive for delays while not fearing talks." Editorials in the pro-independence "Liberty Times" and limited-circulation, pro-independence, English-language "Taipei Times" both supported Chen's stance to "go slow" with regard to cross-Straits talks. An editorial in the pro-unification "United Daily News," however, questioned Chen's strategy and said Beijing has determined to deal with the Taiwan issue by delaying it - namely, the problem will be resolved naturally and no military force will be necessary until it reaches the time Taiwan is at the end of its rope. An editorial in the limited-circulation, conservative, pro-unification, English-language "China Post" commented on Deputy Secretary of States Robert Zoellick's speech in New

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York September 21, saying his speech could be seen as a broad agenda for the strategic dialogue that he has been assigned to lead for the Bush administration in an attempt to alleviate Beijing's deep-seated mistrust of Washington. DPP Legislator Lin Cho-shui, on the other hand, expressed a novel view (for a DPP member) with regard to the U.S. arms procurements in a commentary in the limited-circulation, pro-independence, English-language "Taipei Times." Lin said there is a deep contradiction in the United States' Taiwan policy, in which Washington asks Taiwan to purchase extremely expensive weapons to protect its sovereignty while at the same time it refuses to acknowledge that Taiwan is a sovereign state. A separate "Taipei Times" editorial discussed the possible outbreak of avian influenza and called on the international community and WHO to see the urgent need for Taiwan to be brought into the loop. End summary.

11. U.S.-China-Taiwan Relations

A) "There Is Nothing [for Both Sides of the Taiwan Strait] to Talk about Under the One China [Principle] and [China's] Military Intimidation"

The pro-independence "Liberty Times" [circulation: 600,000] editorialized (10/10):

"President A-bian said the Beijing authorities once claimed that they want to `strive for talks with Taiwan without fearing delays,' but now he wants to modify this statement into `striving for delays while not fearing talks.' According to Chen Shui-bian, this is a kind of thinking and a choice that is the most favorable for the people of Taiwan because it will benefit Taiwan least if the island appears to be anxious or scared. .

". In reality, the purpose of China's `striving for talks' is to create a false image of peace across the Taiwan Strait in the international community and in front of the Taiwan people. Of course, the move [by Beijing] is to cover the fact of China's increasing military threats against Taiwan. .

"This newspaper believes that the [Taiwan] government should delay [cross-Strait talks] `with a clear end in mind.' What are delays `with a clear end in mind'? To put it in plain language, it means militarily, [Taiwan] must take full defensive precautions so that China will not dare to risk danger in desperation; in terms of sovereignty, [Taiwan] must insist on its sovereign status and not flinch from [its position of] one country on each side of the Taiwan Strait; in the economic aspect, [Taiwan] should invest in the island first and should stop the suicidal policy of effective opening; and [finally], [the government] should accelerate its pace in strengthening a consensus among the Taiwan people to push for the efforts of turning Taiwan into a normal country by rectifying its name and writing itself a new constitution. ."

B) "Going Slow Is the Right Move"

The pro-independence, English-language "Taipei Times" [circulation: 30,000] asserted (10/9):

"During an interview with the Reuters news agency published on Friday, President Chen Shui-bian said that there was no need to rush cross-strait talks. Chen said he wanted to `strive for delays while not fearing talks' - which was a clever turn of Beijing's earlier phrase about `striving for talks while not fearing delays.' The slight change in wording clearly shows how the two sides of the Taiwan Strait differ in terms of their priorities on cross-strait relations. .

"The truth of the matter is Chen was simply being polite and tactful in his interview. What he should have done was cut through the word games and clearly say there would be no talks unless there were no strings attached. ."

C) "Who Exactly `Fears No Delays,' Taiwan or Mainland China?"

The conservative, pro-unification "United Daily News" [circulation: 400,000] wrote in an editorial (10/11):

"Chen Shui-bian has said more than once that his current cross-Strait strategy is to `get ready to talks while not fearing delays.' During a recent interview with Reuters, he again modified his statement into: `striving for delays while not fearing talks.' But since Chen denies the [presence of] the `1992 Consensus,' there seems no possibility for `talks.' As a result, there is nothing left in his cross-Strait strategy except for the word `delays'!

"The word `delay,' however, is exactly the focus of Beijing's current cross-Strait strategy. When [Chinese President] Hu Jintao said [Beijing] `strives to talk, is prepared to fight while not fearing delays,' what he meant was that he is ready to move toward the three [afore-mentioned] directions simultaneously. But it seems now that [cross-Strait] talks are uncertain and Hu has not talked about `fights' for some time, and the only [direction left of] `not fearing talks' has become `must delay.' Exactly who is not afraid of `delays' and who will `delay' until the other cannot stand it any more, Hu or Chen, mainland China or Taiwan? This is an old question: On which side does time stand?

"Over the past few years, ever since Chen got elected for his second term, big changes have occurred with regard to Washington-Taipei relations and cross-Strait relations. The new situation is that Beijing has determined to deal with the Taiwan issue by `delaying it'; namely, the problem will be resolved naturally and no military forces will be necessary when it is delayed until the time that Taiwan is at the end of its rope. Chen's `striving for delays,' without doubt, echoes that Beijing's plan and is just what Hu hopes for. Both the ruling and opposition parties in Taiwan,

however, must pay attention to the crisis of `delays';
[they must realize that] Taiwan cannot afford to delay!

"Beijing's discourse has also changed when it comes to Washington-Taipei ties. Beijing said in the past that `Washington should not interfere with China's domestic affairs,' but now it says `China and the United States can co-manage security in the Taiwan Strait.' . This new discourse can not only resolve the conflicts between Washington and Beijing but can also force Washington to work with Beijing to maintain the birdcage [of the `Anti-Secession Law.] Washington and Beijing may have different views about the form of the birdcage, but basically they share the same position regarding the substantive effect of locking Taiwan inside the birdcage. This is because `maintaining the status quo' is in the common interests of Washington and Beijing; even though the two might differ in their motives and objectives, they can still form a consensus on `co-management. .'"

D) "U.S. `Stake' in `One China'"

The conservative, pro-unification, English-language
"China Post" [circulation: 30,000] editorialized
(10/9):

"Taiwan's continued survival as it is now - prosperous, democratic and beyond jurisdiction of the PRC, but not an independent state - depends solely on America's resolve to maintain the status quo. And China is the only force that is ready to disrupt the status quo if Taiwan formally rejects its universally defined status as `part of China.'

"Now, Washington appears ready to groom Beijing to be a `stakeholder' in managing global affairs, including the Taiwan issue. .

"On the eve of the 56th founding anniversary of the People's Republic of China on Oct. 1, the Bush administration laid out its most detailed assessment to date of American-Chinese ties. In an unusual forthright speech on Sept. 21 in New York to the National Committee on U.S.-China Relations, Robert Zoellick, the U.S. deputy secretary of state, explicitly called for China to collaborate with the U.S. on economic matters, embrace democratic government and play a more responsible role in the international community. .

"Although differences between Washington and Beijing are not new, Zoellick's speech could be seen as a broad agenda for the strategic dialogue that he has been assigned to lead for the Bush administration. His mission is to alleviate Beijing's deep-seated mistrust of Washington. . Zoellick's speech, while condescending and patronizing at times, reflects Washington's realization that it couldn't achieve peace unilaterally even if it could start wars that way. Without China's help, the U.S. has little chance to curb North Korea's nuclear-arms ambition or rally the U.N. behind its cause. China, though not yet an ally, is an indispensable contributor to advancing U.S. policies in the world.

"By calling on China to be a responsible stakeholder, Zoellick has tacitly claimed a U.S. `stake' in Beijing's `one China' principle. Peaceful status quo or better cross-strait ties through dialogue is the common goal. Like the U.S., Taiwan should cooperate with the emerging China of today, and work for the democratic China tomorrow."

E) "US Should Support Full Sovereignty for Taiwan"

DPP Legislator Lin Cho-shui commented in the pro-independence, English-language "Taipei Times"
[circulation: 30,000] (10/8):

". The military budget is always a large part of a national budget. The only goal of spending such staggering amounts of money on expensive military equipment is to protect national sovereignty. If we agree with this goal, then it is rather odd that the US does not want to acknowledge that Taiwan is a sovereign state, while at the same time it asks Taiwan to purchase extremely expensive weapons. In fact, the US stance on this matter has seriously jeopardized Taiwan's national security.

"The logic is that it only pays to spend so much money on weapons if they can be used to protect our sovereignty. But if the nation is deprived of its sovereignty, what would be the point of spending so much? Those who firmly believe that Taiwan is a

sovereign state will of course feel that Taiwan has to be well-equipped militarily. However, as the US does not acknowledge our sovereignty, it is hardly surprising to see that many are giving up on the US and are opposing the arms procurement bill. .

"Adopting a 'one China' policy and refusing to acknowledge Taiwan as a sovereign state has been the US' policy for over three decades. Based on its military expertise, the Pentagon believes Taiwanese have a strong civic awareness, while its slowly changing political policies cause the State Department to oppose that civic awareness.

"In this case, we are undoubtedly witnessing a deep contradiction in the US' Taiwan policy. Unless it is resolved, Taiwan will not be able to purchase the weapons it needs. And not only that, warns Steve Chabot, chairman of the Congressional Taiwan Caucus, the US' unwillingness to support full sovereignty is tantamount to agreeing that China owns it. This encourages Beijing to pursue unification by force, and imperils regional security. The US should take a hard look at these contradictions and deal with them."

12. Avian Flu

"Don't Forget Taiwan"

The conservative, pro-unification, English-language "China Post" [circulation: 30,000] commented in an editorial (10/9):

"On Friday, representatives and experts from 80 countries and international health organizations gathered in Washington D.C. for a two-day conference aimed at working out a common strategy for battling a widely expected outbreak of avian flu virus. . The U.S.-led effort to coordinate a response before disaster strikes is a very wise idea that should be commended by all nations. .

"While we are glad to see substantial action being taken to cope with this potential threat to world health, we would also like to remind the international community that Taiwan's lack of participation in international health organizations poses a threat to the success of this coordination effort. .

"Now that the world is trying to learn from the lessons of the SARS crisis, we hope that the WHO and other international health organizations will see the urgent need for Taiwan to be brought into the loop. If the WHO and other organizations fail to change this mistaken policy, we will see Taiwan become a weak link in the chain of international control and our citizens will inevitably suffer. We think that no matter what kinds of claims Beijing thinks it has over our territory and population, there is absolutely no justification for political disputes to directly harm the public health of the Taiwan people. ."

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